

EU confirms current number of Dutch pulse trawl vessels in breach of new laws

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Credit: Pulsefishing.eu

The European Commission has responded to a complaint from the environmental NGO Bloom, acknowledging that the current number of Dutch pulse trawl vessels is in breach of the EU regulations on the practice [imposed last year](#).

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As part of the new regulations, the Dutch are permitted to operate pulse trawl gear aboard 5% of their fleet, or 15 vessels, for research purposes until July 1, 2021, when a full and total ban on pulse trawling will be enforced by the EU.

However, 22 trawlers are still operating with pulse gear according to the environmental NGO Bloom, which it claimed puts the Dutch fleet in breach of EU law in a referral to the EU ombudsman [on June 5 this year](#).

The European Commission has responded by confirming the validity of Bloom's complaints and acknowledging the Dutch had infringed on the new law.

The commission added that it had "obtained the necessary assurances from this member state that a system would be implemented shortly, guaranteeing that no more than 15 beam trawlers using pulsed electric current would be allowed to operate simultaneously."

In response, the NGO has said it fears the European Commission has established a dangerous loophole.

"The European regulation is crystal clear: there can be no more than 15 vessels for the Netherlands until July 1, 2021, at which point electric trawls will be de-equipped, not 15 vessels operating simultaneously, with the others waiting their turn in port!" wrote Frederic Le Manach, Bloom's scientific director. "The difference is immense, and confirming this abusive interpretation would be very dangerous because it would set a slippery precedent."